



The Educated Dog

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When you feel frustrated with your dog's behavior, remember that someone must teach a dog what is acceptable behavior and what is not. A dog that hasn't been given any instructions, training or boundaries can't possibly know what you expect of him. By teaching your dog how you want him to behave, you'll not only have a saner household, but a healthier and happier dog as well.

An Educated Dog:

- ❖ Allows you to handle every part of his body, to check for injury or illness and to give him medication.
- ❖ Has good manners, so he can spend most of his time indoors with his people. That means more supervision, less boredom and fewer opportunities for dangerous mischief. The more time you spend with your dog, the more you will also be able to notice when something is wrong with him.
- ❖ Wants to stay near you, listening for instructions (and praise). This means he'll have less opportunity to stray into danger.
- ❖ Will walk or run beside you on a leash without pulling, dragging or strangling, so you and your dog can get more exercise and spend more time together.
- ❖ Knows that "drop it" and "leave it alone" are phrases that mean business, so he'll have fewer opportunities to swallow dangerous objects. He also can be taught what things and places are out of bounds, like hot stoves, heaters or anxious cats. However, you'll still need to limit his access to dangerous places when you cannot supervise or instruct him.
- ❖ Will "sit" immediately, simply because you say so. No matter what danger may be imminent, a dog that is suddenly still is suddenly safe. And a dog that will "stay" in that position is even safer.
- ❖ Understands his boundaries, knows what's expected of him and has fewer anxieties. Less stress means a healthier dog.

By training your dog, you can help prevent tragedy and develop a better relationship with him. Keep in mind, however, that even an educated dog needs supervision, instruction and boundaries -- sometimes even physical boundaries. Allowing your dog, no matter how educated he may be, to walk, run or roam outside of a fenced area or off of a leash, is putting him in danger.

How to Have a Well-Trained Socialized Dog

- Call your local Behaviorist and get your dog enrolled in a class. Dogs under 8 months of age can get into a puppy class to be socialized. Dogs too old for puppy class can join a basic obedience class to learn to sit, stay, walk on a leash, come and settle. No dog is too old or too young to begin learning.
- Take your dog out into the world. Teach your dog how to have good manners in any situation. Train in different locations with different distractions.
- If you have a puppy, get it used to being handled and held like it would be at the vet's office.
- Give your dog enrichment activities and interactive toys to burn excess energy. See handouts "Interactive Dog Toys" and "Enrichment Activities."
- Make training fun. Positive reinforcement classes are fun, but you can also play games with your dog to hone its skills. See handout "Games, Games, Games!"

Modern methods of dog training are not likely to be force-based or difficult to learn. Positive reinforcement training focuses on training your dog by using a reward system. Training should strengthen the bond you have with your dog, not damage it. If you find yourself in a class and you don't feel comfortable with the method or training, find a new class. Be wary of anyone who guarantees your dog's obedience performance. Have fun with training and enjoy your dog!